لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

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SEPT., OCT., 1982—TABUK, IKHA, 1361

EDITOR
M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD, was born in 1835 in Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of World Reformer to combat the false Religious Philosopies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his fore-fathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world.

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He initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement, to revive faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the Religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter by means of His signs, to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellence of the teachings of the Holy Quran, to wean men from war-like tendenies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes, to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of all the depressed races and nations of the world, to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences for their evil ways, to collect under one banner all the true lovers of peace and to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, good-will and selfless fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood.

He passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion, Hazrat Hafiz Haji Hakim Maulvi Noor-ud-Din. After his death in 1914, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, was chosen as Head of the Movement. During his 52 years long leadership, he organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965 the electoral college named with one accord, Sahibzada Mirza Nasir Ahmad as Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement. During his seventeen years of Khilafat he established many new missions, built new mosques and also established the Majlis Nusrat Jahan, which established score of new schools and hopitals in West Africa. As a result of sever heart attack he passed away on June 9, 1982. On June 10, 1982 The Electoral College named Sahibzada Mirza Tahir Ahmad as Head of Movement.

For further information about the Movement, its activities, aims, objectives and literature, enquires may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to :

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The Review of Religions

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems vital to the religious and spiritual welfare of man, but it does not give any assuraunce to publish all articles received by the Editor, nor does it accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

EDITOR

M. G. AHMAD

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THE MOSQUE AT PEDRO ABAD

It would gladen the hearts of Ahmadis, indeed of all Muslims, all over the world to know that Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad Khalifatul Masih IV formally inaugurated the Basharat Mosque in Pedro Abad, Spain on 10-9-1982. The foundation stone of this Mosque was laid by the late Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Khalifatul Masih III in the last year of the 14th century Hijra on 9-10-1980. This is the first Mosque to be built in that country in the last seven hundred and forty six years—since the breakdown of Muslim rule in Spain.

This Mosque has not come as a windfall. It has a long history of devout prayers and humble but earnest and persistent efforts behind it. Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Khalifatul Masih II during his Khilafat tried to spread Islam all over the world but he had a speclal and consuming desire for the revival and resurgence of the lost glory of Islam in Spain. In order to bring back the Spanish people to the fold of Islam he, with sincere and humble supplications to

Allah, first sent a missionary to study the situation in Spain in 1936. But because of the conditions prevailing there he could not stay there. This did not dampen or discourage his zeal. *Once again* Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar was sent to Spain on June 3, 1945. This was the beginning of the first regular Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission to Spain. The period immediately after the second world War was a time of great trouble and turmoil all over Europe. Moreover there was no religious freedom in Spain. Open and overt propagation of Islam was not allowed. But Mr. Karam Ilahi Zafar did not lose heart and did not give up. Following the teachings of Islam without breaking the law of the land he managed to introduce Islam to a number of people in Spain.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III visited Spain in 1970 and throughout his stay there he offered special prayers to Allah for creating an opening for the large scale spread of Islam in Spain. Allah listened to his prayers and Spanish Government announced that from henceforth everyone will have the freedom of religion and conscience. It was thus that on October 9, 1980 Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, with the grace of God, laid the foundation stone of Basharat Mosque in Pedro Abad near Cordoba. He is no longer with us but we are sure that his soul must be rejoicing on this historic and auspicious occasion. May Allah make this Mosque a base for the speedy spreading of Islam in Spain and a forerunner of thousands of similar Mosques all over the Country. May the people of Spain once again come to love the Holy Prophet and his teachings as they did in the days of yore.

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MUSLEH MAUD SAID :

'The day is not far when the servants of the Holy Prophet shall enter Spain as moths swarm to a lit lamp.'

Among the events of the Islamic history which is most dear to me is the saying of an Hispanic General whose name was probably Abdul Aziz.

The power of the Muslims had weakened in Spain to such an extent that they had the possession of the one last castle only. The Christians put before them a few conditions asking the Muslims to yield to them for their safety. The conditions were so humiliating that after submitting to them, Islam could no longer stay there with honour. The king openly agreed to the conditiods so also did most of his Generals.

Nevertheless, one General (Abdul Aziz) stood up and addressed thus : O people ! What are you doing ? Are you sure that the Christians would fulfill their promise ? Our forefathers sowed the seed of Islam in Spain and now with your own hands you want to pull down this tree. They replied : What else could be done ? What other strategy is there to face the enemy successfully ?

The same General retorted, the question is neither how to face the enemy successfully nor we need to think of it. We have to carry out our obligation. Each and every one of us should die rather than yield to these conditions. This will secure us from the humiliation of handing over the kingdom to the enemy with our hands. Do whatever is in your power, and leave the rest to your God, the Sublime.

Hearing this, they simply laughed and questioned the benefit of this sacrifice. So, they all refused, but this General (Abdul Aziz) said : If you like this disgrace, it is upto

you. However, I shall never hand over the Islamic banner to the enemies with my own hands. There was almost an army of One Hundred Thousand gathered outside the castle, yet, he (General Abdul Aziz) alone holding a sword in his hand come out and attacked the enemy and won martyrdom while fighting.

No doubt, his martyrdom could not retain the Muslim rule in Spain, yet his name is ever living and his death could not efface it. The King and the Generals who did not agree with his advice, and wanted to save their lives have all passed away into eternity. We can hardly control ourselves from cursing them when we read of them or hear of them. Whenever I study the history of Spain or I remember these events, I always pray without exception for this General. The drops of his blood even today are calling us from the valleys of Spain, to come and avenge his blood.

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No doubt, that brave General has died. But what is death? Do people not die otherwise? Did that king and his Generals, who did not fight with the enemy, not lose their lives? They too passed away, but our hearts curse them, while they supplicate for this General (Abdul Aziz). Even today his attraction is calling us towards Spain.

If the Muslims' sense of honor remained, and as it is evident from the advent of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) that it shall not only stay but rather it will enhance more than ever before then the day is not far when the voice emanating from the drops of blood of this General shall manifest its affinity and the true Muslims shall once again reach Spain and hoist the banner of Islam over there. His soul is calling us even today. And our souls too are calling: O martyr of fidelity! Thou are not alone. The true servants of the religion of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of God be upon him) are waiting. No sooner they hear the voice of God than they, like moths

on light, shall march into that country and spread the light of Allah the Sublime over there.....

Therefore, if it had been decreed by God, the people of Spain shall certainly discard disbelief and the associating of partners with God, only through our preaching and teaching. Or they would be committing such attrocites against us that God the Sublime shall grant us permission to repel the aggression. And those who had the hardihood to drive the Muslims out of their country by force, shall present themselves at the tomb of Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) as penitents, beseaching that his servants are at his service and the soul of a single-handed fighter shall never be frustrated. (The Daily Alfazl, May, 6, 1944 ; Tareekh-Ahmadiyyt, Vol. X, pp.173—174).

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful.

What unites us is more important than what separates us

An address delivered by Maulvi A. Wahab Adam, Amir and Missionary-in-charge, Ahmadiyya Movement, Ghana, at the Kwame Nkrumah Conference Centre on 8th June, 1982.

This Religious Conference which has brought together leaders of various religions in the country on one platform bears testimony to the fact that the country's present rulers are conscious of the immense contribution of religion to the social, moral and spiritual development of Ghana. It is of the utmost importance that this consciousness continue to guide succeeding leaders and administrators to guarantee for the people of this country freedom of religion whereby adherents of various religions can continue to make such contributions as will enrich the lives of our people. The Holy Quran declares in most emphatic terms "there should be no compulsion in religion" (Chapter 2 : 257). In other words it should be the inalienable right of every citizen of every country to profess, propagate and practise any religion of his or her choice without any interference at all whatsoever.

The topic given me for discussion is "What unites us is more important than what separates us". When we consider the property and enormous wealth that are destroyed and energies that are dissipated through disunity borne out of chieftancy disputes, religious bickering and labour unrest, one would agree that unity should be considered as paramount in any society which wishes to ensure progress and prosperity for its people.

When we look around ourselves we see diverse things

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created by God—the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon, the rivers and the oceans, the trees and the mountains and the valleys of diverse hues and colours—each of these has its own distinct characteristics yet despite their distinctiveness, they all work together in unison to make the world beautiful and give the world stability and provide comfort, progress and prosperity for man. God says in the Holy Quran :

> "And one of His signs is the creation of the Heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues, and colours. Surely there are signs in this for those who possess knowledge." (Chapter 30 : 23).

Unity, which means, binding together, pre-supposes the existence of separate entities. When we talk of unity, therefore, we are not suggesting for example that man should be turned into woman or the young should be turned into the old and vice versa or members of one tribe, one religion, or one profession should cease to belong to that tribe, religion or profession and become, willy nilly, members of another tribe, religion or profession. It is impossible to conceive of a society in which there are no children who should respect their elders or elders who should freely share their rich experience with the youth.

What is meant by Unity is, like the heavens, and the earth and all the diverse things created around us, we should live in harmony and cooperate to enrich our lives on earth. In the Quranic verse quoted a short while ago, we are told that despite the diversity of our tongues and colours and religions what we must realise is that having been created by One God, we all are, as it were, "children of one father" and should therefore try our utmost to live in peace and harmony and co-operate to make life worth living. Coming to specifics, the Holy Quran admonishes Muslims in these words :

> "O ye who believe, be mindful of your duty to Allah in all respects, every moment of your lives, so that death whenever it overtakes you, should find you in in a state of complete submission to Him.

> Take fast hold, all together, of the rope of Allah and be not divided. Call to mind the favour of Allah which he bestowed upon you when you were at enmity with each other and He united your hearts in love so that by His grace you became as brethern. You were on the brink of a pit of fire and He rescued you from it.

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> Thus does Allah explain to you His Commandments that you may be guided. Let there be from among you a party whose business it should be to invite to goodness, to enjoin equity and to forbid evil. It is they who shall prosper." (Holy Quran Chapter, 3 : 103-105).

Hence, Muslims have been called upon in clear words to realize that as believers in One God, One Book and One Prophet, what unites them, despite their adherence to different schools of thought, is more important than what separates them. But Islam expands this appeal for unity to embrace all religions. The Holy Quran says :

> "Say to the People of the Book, let us agree upon one matter which is the same for you and for us, namely that we worship none But Allah and that we associate no partners with Him and that some of us take not others for lords besides Allah".
>
> (Holy Quran Chapter 3 : 65)

Hence the Holy Quran exhorts all believers in religion that we should allow our common belief in One God and One Humanity to unite us.

The Holy Prophet of Islam, on whom be peace, set a very charming example for us in this matter.

It is reported in the Traditions that members of a Christian delegation from Najran were allowed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace, to pray in his own mosque at Medina.

These were the teachings of Islam which inspired me at a similar religious conference organized by the Ahmadiyya

Movement at the Kumasi Town Hall some four years ago, to call for the setting up of a Council of Religions on which all religions in the country would be represented. I am glad to report that through the active cooperation and support of other religious leaders who realize the importance of harmony and peace among people of various religions, a National Council of Religions has already been set up on which various Christian Organizations including the Christian Council and the Catholic Secretariat are represented.

Also represented are Muslim Organizations, Bhuddism, Hinduism and the Bahai faith.

This way, religious organizations in this country have practically demonstrated that the purpose of religion on earth is to promote peace and harmony and not to encourage discord.

The establishment of the National Council of Religions places Ghana far ahead of other nations where religion is used by certain people with vested interests to divide and not to unite people.

I should like to take this opportunity to call on the Government to give official recognition to this National Council of Religions and encourage it to help guide people of this country on the path of morality and virtue.

One cannot consider unity without considering what separates us with a view to eliminating the things that separate us.

The Holy Quran holds that Adam, the first man to administer a society on earth was charged with the responsibility of seeing to it that man is provided with food, clothes and shelter.

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God declares to Adam :

"It is ordained for you that you shall not be hungry in the garden nor shall you be naked and that you shall not thirst therein nor shall you be exposed

to the sun." (Holy Quran Chapter 20 : 119-120)

It is, therefore, necessary that such a just society is created in which all citizens can be guaranteed the provision of these basic needs of man.

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Then there is the question of distribution of wealth.

Islam believes that the whole world and whatever is in it has been created by God. He, therefore, is the Real Owner of the enormous wealth of the earth. He in turn, has entrusted this to man so that this wealth may be equitably shared among mankind.

There is, for instance, the institution of Zakaat in Islam, which stipulates that the poor has an equitable share in the wealth of the rich and that the rich should be taxed for the upkeep of the poor.

Here it may be useful to mention also that where there is shortage or scarcity of essential consumable items, Islam permits rationing which is one way of ensuring that each gets an equitable share of whatever the nation can afford.

We know from the story of the Prophet Joseph, on whom be peace, as mentioned in the Holy Quran that when it become known that there would be scarcity of grains in a certain season, a portion of the grains produced was stored up and rationed in the lean season.

Another method advocated by Islam is the use of the scale in measuring items and the honest use of the scale.

The Holy Quran says :

> "Woe unto those who give short measure ; those who, when they take by measure from other people, take it full ; But when they give by measure to others or weigh to them, they give them less. Do not such people know that they will be raised again unto a terrible day, the day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds ?" (Holy Quran Chapter, 83 : 2-7)

Several developing countries such as India and Pakistan have tried with success the rationing system and the adoption of the scale for measuring every consumable item to prevent cheating in day to day market transactions. There is no reason why these should not be tried in Ghana.

Though initially it would cost to prepare special registration cards for each family unit or to import the scales, but the advantages in such expenditures far outweigh the cost to us in shame as a nation and in terms of the hardship which our people have to suffer.

Scarcity reminds us of the importance of not only to produce but also the proper use of our resources. On the need to work to produce, the Holy Quran says :

"And that man will have nothing but what he strives for". (Holy Quran Chapter, 53 : 40)

In our country, precious time is wasted on gambling such as lotto while precious money goes to the drain through excessive use of alcohol at funerals and other such occasions. What Allah says in the Holy Quran should be an admonition to us as a nation :

"Surely Allan changes not the condition of a people until they change their attitude towards life".
(Holy Quran Chapter, 13 : 12)

Allah says in the Holy Quran :

"O ye who believe liquor, gambling, idols and divining arrows are but abomination of satanic devices. So turn wholly away from each one of them that you may prosper". (Holy Quran Chapter, 5 : 91)

It will be necessary, therefore, for Ghanaians to change their attitudes towards gambling, funerals, work, and a whole lot of other things before we can become a great nation.

Any talk about wealth and equitable sharing of wealth may appear to be irrelevant in a religious discussion.

Islam, however, looks at the matter differently.

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God says in the Holy Quran:

"Ask them who has forbidden the use of adornment which Allah has produced for His servants and wholesome articles of food? Tell them: These are for the benefit of those who believe in this life also, and exclusively for them on the day of judgement. Thus do we expound the signs for those who have knowledge.

"Tell them my lord has only forbidden indecencies, overt and hidden, and, all manner of sins and wrongful transgression and that you associate with Allah that for which He has sent no authority and that you say of Allah that of which you have no knowledge."

(Holy Quran Chapter, 7 : 33-34)

It is for this reason that apart from its concern about the moral and spiritual upliftment of the people of this country the Ahmadiyya Movement is also actively concerned with the material well-being of the people. The Ahmadiyya Movement has established a number of primary, middle and Secondary Schools as well as hospitals in various parts of the country.

The Ahmadiyya Movement has also set up farms in various parts of the country to produce food for the people.

The Supreme Head of the world-wide Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam has recently initiated a scheme whereby soya beans will be planted on a large scale. Already an agricultural expert is exploring the possibility of multiplying soya bean seeds at our school at Essarkyir in the Central Region.

It is to be hoped that these efforts will be richly rewarded by Allah.

It is my sincere prayer to Allah that He may, out of His grace, grant our nation such unity as will ensure peace, progress and prosperity for all. Amen.

And our last words are: All praise is due to Allah, the Lords of all the worlds.

Thank you.

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A Few Verses from the Holy Quran——

We will surely try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits; then give glad tidings to the steadfast, who, when a misfortune overtakes them do not lose heart, but say: Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. It is these on whom there are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided. (2: 156-158)

Man is often in great need of comfort from God. Many a time he is so distressed that if he had not the assurance conveyed to him in this verse, he would in his despair have denied God, or have broken off with Him, or succumbed to the extremity of his grief.

(Baraheen Ahmadiyya, Vol. IV p. 294, footnote 11)

There are two great ways in which God bestows His mercy and sends down His blessings. (1) That He may open the gates of-His bounties and mercy for those who prove steadfast under misfortune, sorrow or grief as He has said: Give glad tidings to the steadfast who, when a misfortune overtakes them, do not lose heart but say: Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. It is these on whom there are blessings from their Lord and mercy and it is these who are rightly guided. Thus God says: It is Our law that We afflict the believers in diverse ways and Our mercy descends upon these who are steadfast and the ways of success and prosperity are opened for them.

(2) By sendnig Messengers, Prophets, leaders, saints and Khalifas, so that through following their guidance people may tread along the straight path and save themselves through their example. So God, the Exalted, designed that both these

ways may be provided through the progeny of this humble one. Thus He sent Bashir to provide the first way for sending down His mercy, so that by furnishing, through his early death, an occasion for believers to be steadfast he should prove a source of glad tidings for them For thousands of believers who shared the grief of his demise for the sake of Allah, he became a means of intercession by Allah's leave, and a source of many blessings... For providing the second way of the descent of His mercy God, the Most High, will send a second Bashir. (Sabz Ishtahar, pp. 15-17, footnote)

The trial mentioned in this verse has a purpose differing from most trials. Normally a person tried is not aware of the result that might ensue from the trial. Here the divine purpose is that the person tried may be made aware of his inner merits and demerits. (Aaeenahi Kamalat-i-Islam, p. 155)

In this verse the believers are warned that they will be tried in diverse ways sometimes they will encounter fear, sometimes experience want, sometimes suffer loss, sometimes lose dear ones, sometimes see their labour and effort go waste ; but it announces good cheer for those who prove steadfast in adversity and say : We and all that we call ours belong to God and must return to Him. Such will inherit the mercy and blessings of God. They are treading along God's path. This is steadfastness and subordinating one's pleasure to that of Allah. But from one point of view it is also equity. Throughout one's life one finds that, on numerous occasions God, the Most High, gives effect to one's wishes, and continuously bestows numberless bounties upon one, then it would be most inequitable that when He designs to enforce His will one should demur or be displeased or disavow ones allegiance.

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(Report of Conference of Great Religions, pp. 115-116)

We shall try you with fear, hunger, loss of lives, property and effort, meaning that all this may be suffered direct under divine decree or at the hands of enemies ; but there

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is good cheer for those who, when afflicted by misfortune, say : We belong to Allah and shall return to Him. Such shall enjoy God's blessings and His mercy and they are the ones who are truly guided. From this it follows that knowledge which is confined to the intellect and the heart is not of much avail. The only knowledge that helps is that which regulates conduct and asserts its influence in practice.

(Report of Conference of Great Religions, p. 205)

The Book of God shows that in the matter of prayer and supplication He, out of His mercy, deals with His righteous servants like a friend ; that is to Say, He sometimes gives effect to the wish of the supplicant, as He has said ; Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40 : 61) ; and at other times He makes His own will prevail, as in the verse under comment. The reason is that by giving effect to the wish of the supplicant He designs to foster his faith and insight, and by imposing His own will on other occasions He designs to bestow the robe of His pleasure upon His servant, to promote his rank, and through His love to speed him along the path of guidance (Kashti Nooh p. 19, footnote).

God deals with a believer like a friend. He sometimes wills to give effect to the wish of the believer, and on other occasions He desires the believer to accept His will. When He says : Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61) ; He desires to give effect to the wish of the supplicant, and in the verse under comment He desires His servant to accept His will. Alas, an unwise person looks at one side of the picture and not on both sides.

(Zameemah Baraheen Ahmadiyyah, Part V, p. 66 footnote)

It is an error to imagine that every prayer of the elite is accepted. The truth is that God deals with them like friends. He accepts their prayers, but on occasions He wills that they should submit to His decrees, as we see is the case between friends. Accordingly, at one place in the Quran God announces the principle of acceptance of prayer : Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61) ; and in the verse

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under comment inculcates cheerful acceptance of His decrees. These two verses should be read together as they illustrate God's way in the matter of prayers and the relationship between the Divine Master and His servants. (Haqeeqatul Wahy, p. 19)

Prayer and divine decree have an intimate relationship. A contingent decree may be modified by entreaty. Prayer is always helpful in face of trouble. Those who deny the effectiveness of prayer labour under a misunderstanding. The Holy Quran has set forth two aspects of prayer. In one Allah, the Exalted, imposes His own will; in the other He wills to give effect to the wish of the supplicant. In the verse under comment He emphasizes that His absolute decree is supreme and that it should be responded to with: To Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. At other times His grace and bounty are in upsurge. This is disclosed in: Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40:61). A believer should have comprehension of both aspects. (Al-Hakam, Vol. VI, No. 8, 28 February 1902, p. 4)

A believer should not look upon misfortune as evil. Allah has said: We will surely try you with somewhat of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives, and fruits; then give glad tidings to the steadfast who, when a misfortune overtakes them, do not lose heart but say: Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. Such misfortunes when they overtake divine Messengers are harbingers of divine bounties, but when they afflict evildoers they ruin them. A believer should meet misfortune with: To Allah we belong and to Him shall we return; and thus seek the pleasure of Allah.

Every good done by a believer has its reward, but the reward of steadfastness is without limit. Allah accounts the steadfast as those who turly understand Allah's pleasure. God divides the life of a steadfast one into two parts. One, when he prays God accepts his prayer, as He has said: Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61); and: I respond to the call of the suppiicant when he calls on Me (2.187). Secondly, on occasions when in His wisdom God does not accept the

prayer of a steadfast one, the latter bows his head in token of submission to God's will. It may be said that God, the Exalted, deals with a believer as a friend deals with a friend. As between two friends, one accepts the wish of the other and, on another occasion, expects the other to accept his wish. In the same way, God accepts the prayer of a believer, as He has said: Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61): and He desires a believer to respond to Him, as in the verse under comment. Faith means an appreciation of this relationship. It is not one-sided.

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A believer should not grieve over misfortune. He is not more than a Prophpt. The truth is that along with misfortune a fountain of love gushes fortn. A believer never encounters a misfortune from which he does not extract many types of delight. Indeed a believer does not find as much joy in comfort as he finds in misfortune. Men of God enjoy being battered about by God.

A favourite of God does not suffer misfortune because of sinfulness. A girl's parents love her dearly, but on marriage she has to part from them. This is most painful for them. Why do they endure the agony? Because they realize that she can fulfil herself only through marriage. A believer also fulfil's himself through misfortunes. Observe what a splendid example of the highest moral qualities the Holy Prophet set up under trials and sufferings. Had he not suffered so much these qualities would not have shone so brightly. Others appraise a believer's trials as suffering, but he does not so regard them. Thus those who are c ose to God have to pass through greater tribulations than the worldly minded. A believer has to suffer death everyday. It is imperative that a believer should hold fast to his penitence, and should realise that new life is bestowed on him through penitence. If you desire to enjoy the fruits of penitence, complete your penitence through righteous conduct. When a gardner plants a

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rose bush he nurtures it with water. Faith is a plant which is nurtured with righteous conduct. Without righteous conduct it would wilt and die like a plant which is deprived of water.

(Al-Badar, Vol. II, No. 9, 20 March 1903, p. 67)

If you are a believer you will not account misfortune an evil. Allah, the Exalted, says: We shall try you from time to time with loss of property, or children or harvests, etc. Those who are steadfast under such trials and do not lose heart are greeted with the good news that the gates of God's mercy are wide open for them and they will inherit God's blessings. Those who at such times say: We and all that pertains to us belong to God and shall return to God will not suffer any grief. Such as these have their being in God's pleasure. They are the steadfast, and for the steadfast God has provided recompense without limit.

The rightly guided are those who have discovered what God's pleasure is and they order their lives accordingly. These are the saints and friends of God. You should also aspire to achieve those heights and strive after them.

God deals with man as a friend would deal with a friend. A friend does what his friend desires, and in turn desires that his friend should do what he desires, So does Allah. The verses: Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40. 61); and: When My servants enquire from thee concerning Me, tell them I am close; I respond to the call of the supplicat when he calls on Me (2. 187); indicate that He accepts a supplicant's prayer and gives effect to his wish. The verse: So should they respond to Me and have firm faith in Me (2. 187); and the verse under comment indicates that He also desires man to respond to Him.

Some people complain that God does not hear prayer or criticise saintly people that a particular prayer of theirs was not heard. They are utterly unaware of the way of God to which we have drawn attention. He who has had experience of it

would know it well. Allah, the Exalted, has set forth illustrations of responding and requiring response. To accept both is faith. Do not insist only upon one aspect, lest you should be held guilty of seeking to break God's law and opposing Him.

Misfortue is not prolonged for a believer. A fountain of mercy, love and delight is released for him. A lover finds delight in the intensity of love's yearning. It is difficult o explain these mysteries to a prosaic person, but those who ave some experience of them understand them well. They do not find that delight in conditions of comfort which they find in hours of suffering. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi has mentioned in his Masnavi a disorder a person suffering from which can find respite only while he is being beaten and battered. Failing that he suffers. The same is the case with men of God. So long as they suffer misfortune and are subjected to hardships they are happy and delighted, for the rest they are uneasy and comfortless.

God has power to shield His servants from all discomfort and to make their lives easy and comfortable, and their existence luxurious, but He has not so ordained. There are many profound reasons for this. How dear is a daughter to her parents, often dearer than sons. But a time comes when the parents have to endure parting from her. That is a very painful time, even for the beholders. A stupid person may even describe it as cruelty. But her need of fulfilment makes such parting imperative and it becomes a source of joy and blessings for both parties.

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The same is the case with the men of God. Some of their high moral qualities would not come into play without their undergoing suffering and hardships. We expounde the high moral qualitiess of the Holy Prophet and expatiate upon them with pride and gratification. This is because he had to pass through sufferings and hardships, else how could we have held him aloft as an excellent examplar? So do not look down upon hardships. They draw towards themselves

the delights of nearness to God. For the sake of the delight that is bestowed upon the favourites of God all earthly and worldly delights have to be discarded. To approach near to God it is necessary to bear hardships greatefully and to endure a new death every day. When a person dies to worldly desires and passions he then attains to the life eternal. There is no death after that. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) has said: The Quran has been revealed in sorrow, you should read it also in sorrow. This shows that the greater part of the Holy Prophet's life was passed in suffering. Sow the seeds of penitence, so that you may eat of its fruits. The tree of penitence is like a fruit tree in a garden. Whatever care and servicing is needed for such a tree materially, the same is needed spiritually for the tree of penitence. Then if you desire to eat of its fruits, fulfil its laws and conditions. Else vain is your desire.

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(Al-Hakam, Vol. VII, No. 11, 24 March 1903, pp. 12-13)

There is no great honour for a person than that he should live as one belonging wholly to God. Those who establish a relationship with Him find that He sets up a sort of reciprocity with them On some occasions He gives effect to that which they desire and on others He does that which He desires Himself. On the one side He says: Call on Me, I shall respond to you: and on the other He warns: We shall surely try you; as in the verse under comment This shows that not all occasions call for prayer. On the occasion of a trial the appropriate response is: To Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. These are occasions for steadfastness and submission to the will of Allah. The uninitiated are apt to stumble on such occasions and to worry why prayer is not heard. They imagine they hold God in the hollow of their hands and can make Him do what they please. When Imam Husain was tried would he not have prayed to be delivered from it? When the Holy Prophet's children died would he not have prayed? The truth is these were occasion, for

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steadfastness and submission to the will of Allah.

(Al-Badar, Vol. II, Nos. 41 and 42, 29 October and 8 November 1903, pp. 321-322)

It is people's way that in prosperity they keep away from God, but when troub e arrives they make lengthy supplications, and they cut asunder from Him on the slightest excuse. They are prepared to believe in God on condition that He should on no occasion act contrary to their wishes. Whereas in friendship there is reciprocity; each has his way on occasion. God has also indicated that way. At one place he has said: Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61): that is to say He would accept the prayer of the supplicant; and in the verse under comment He has announced emphatically his design to try His servants. But today p.ople wish to subordinate God to their will like a slave, forgetting that all the saintly people achieved their spiritual ranks because they subordinated their own will to the will of God.

(Al-Badar, Vol. III, No. 2, 8 January 1904, p. 5)

When a person supplicates God, most often his prayer is heard; but sometimes God imposes His own will on the supplicant. A friendship is maintained on the basis of each having his way on some matters. It cannot be maintained if one insists upon having his way all the time. He who conceives that his prayer should always be accepted and that he should always have his will is in great error. Allah in His perfect wisdom, has sent down two verses in the Holy Quran in this context. In one he has said: Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61). In the other, the one under comment, He has said: You will surely be tried in diverse ways so that you may be accounted worthy of receiving My bounties. God tries His servants then those who prove steadfast are safeguarded and are not allowed to perish. God always answers prayer, whether in the form desired, or in another form which His wisdom may prefer. It is not my experience

that when supplication is carried to the requisite limit it remains unanswered.

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(Al-Badar, Vol. II, No. 32, 9 August 1906, p. 3)

At one place God has said: Call on Me, I shall respond (40.61): meaning, ask and it shall be given you; and at another place He has revealed the verse under comment. This shows that God puts His servants to the test. In truth man is sent into the world to be tried. If he is to enjoy himself as he pleases, and all that he wishes is to happen, he cannot be accounted a servant of God. My community should keep it well in mind that Allah, the Most High has ordained a division, and that this division should be conformed to. One part is that He hears you and gives effect to your wishes and the other part is that He enforces His own will. He who desires that God should always give effect to his will is in danger of turning away from God.

Let no one imagine that he alone is tried and suffers hardship. The Prophets have always been tried. When Adam's son died, was he not grieved? It is related concerning the Holy Prophet that he had lost eleven children. He possessed all human qualities. He must have suffered grief each time. But steadfastness is richly rewarded. All divine scriptures inculcate submission to God's will. A person who puts himself voluntarily under a spiritual discipline to win the pleasure of Allah makes allowances for himself on the score of health and his powers of endurance, and patterns the discipline to suit his comfort and convenience; but when Allah imposes a trial it leaves no margin for the comfort and convenience of the individual concerned. Voluntary discipline is subject to one's own control, but man has no control over a trial imposed by God. But under a trial from God a person makes rapid progress and achieves heights that he cannot attain through voluntary effort and endeavour. Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61); carries with it no promise of reward;

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but the verse under comment promises great rewards for the steadfast. It says these are the people who shall receive great blessings and mercies and these are the people who are rightly guided. This is the way to win Allah's pleasure. To seek to become God's partner and to direct Him accordingly to one's own will is a dangerous course that would entail ruin. The members of my community should embrace eagerly every opportunity of marching forward in accordance with the directions set forth in this verse.

(Al-Hakam. Vol. XI No. 34, 24 September 1907, p. 5)

It is a bounty and favour on the part of God, the Most HIgh, that He accepts the supplication of His creatures, for it would be quite consistent with His Divinity and Providence to enforce His own will in every case.

On the occasions to which the verse under comment refers He desires to give effect to His own will. When hunger afflicts a person, or he suffers loss of property or business, or loses children, or his labour goes waste, or other harm befalls him, he is tried by God. At such time God manifests His power of governance and desires to enforce His will. A sincere and faithful believer cheerfully accepts the will of God and submits gladly to it. He does not complain or feel constrained. That is why the verse proclaims that the steadfast shall be greeted with good news. It does not say; Give glad tidings to those who pray. It says: Give glad tidings to the steadfast. It is, therefore necessary that a supplicant should not lose heart through impatience, but should patiently and steadfastly uphold the will and plesure of Allah. Men of God are given understanding whether a purpose is viable. If so they pray, otherwise they reconcile themselves to God's decree. There are only two ways. To pray when the signs of a misfortune are perceived, and to be steadfast when it become clear that such is God's decree, as did the Holy Prophet whenever a child of his died, among

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whom Ibrahim was included.

God having instituted these two divisions, and this being His way, it would be utterly wrong to wish it otherwise, for He has said: There is no changing of Allah's way (33. 63 ; 48.24). I have repeatedly pointed out that God deals with man as a friend deals with friend. A friend gives effect to a friend's wish or desires the latter to give effect to his wish. There is a sort of reciprocity in the matter of prayer. It would be wrong of a person to conceive that God would in every case give effect to his wish. Even a mother cannot give effect to every wish of her child. A child may ask for a glowing ember. Would a mother hand it over to the child? If a child's eye is sore, the mother would put a few drops of eye lotion into it. A human being needs training and development, so he has to endure beatings that he may be trained in sincerity, loyalty and firmness.

He who seeks help through prayer should be patient and not hasty. He should wait patiently and hope for the best. While giving warning of trials and tribulations, God has promised blessings for the steadfast. This means that in this manner God opens another way for the acceptance of prayer. We observe the same in the case of persons in authority. If a subordinate endures a rebuke with dignity and does not complain or think ill of the superior, he is soon promoted. The Quran makes it clear that trials are indispensable for the perfection of faith. For instance, it is said: Do people imagine that it is enough for them to say: We believe; and that they will not be tried (29.3)? If misfortunes and hardships are endured patiently, and God's decree's are accepted cheerfully, this becomes a presage for the resolution of difficulties. (Al-Hakam, Vol. VI, No. 26, 10 October 1902, pp. 13-14)

We shall try you with fear and hunger and loss of property and of children, and waste of effort and labour, etc. For instance, a harvest is suddenly destroyed by fire or a projet diligently pursued comes to nought. Many types of

calamities and misfortunes overtake a person. These are trials from God. In such case those who seek the pleasure of Allah and are reconciled to His decrees cheerfully affirm: To Allah we belong and to Him shall we return; they utter no complaint and entertain no grievance. Concerning such Allah says: These are the people who inherit God's special mercy and God guides them through their difficulties. Bear in mind God is most merciful, gracious and generous. When a person upholds His pleasure and is reconciled to His will and dacrees, God does not fail to bestow upon him his due recompense. This is the situation on which God desires to enforce His will. The other situation is that which He has described in: Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61). Here he promises to give effect to the wish of His servant.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. IX No 18, 24 May 1905, p. 8)

Man is confronted with many trials. The verse under comment mentions several categories: fear, hunger, loss of property, waste of labour, loss of fruits and of children, loss of effort. The effort to gain knowledge, to promote business or cultivation, etc., is all included in these categories. These losses are a great misfortune. The person involved believes he will succeed; God in His wisdom determines he should fail.

Thi verse shows that God has prescribed four categories of trials: fear, loss of property, loss of lives and loss of fruits.

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(Risala Al-Anzar, p. 56)

In the case of fear it appears that dignified endurance of a state of fear is atonement by itself. No loss is involved and the issue is happy. Hunger means adversity. Sometimes a torn shirt cannot be replaced. Thirst is included in hunger.

Loss of property for instance, through robbery, which sometimes does not leave enough even to provide a single meal. What a calamity!

Loss of lives, for instance, death of children, relatives friends.

Fruits include children and fruits of labour and effort. Sometimes students who fail in their examinations commit suicide.

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Allah greets with good news those who, when they are thus tried prove steadfast and affirm: To Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. He alone becomes God's favourite who upholds God in every situation of distress and calamity. Prayer means an entreaty that the supplicant's wish may be fulfilled. Allah grants the entreaty or determines that His will shall prevail.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. IV, No. 44, 10 December 1900, p. 3)

Secular authorities have instituted examinations for the purpose of selecting those who may be appointed to responsible positions. This is the divine way also. Allah, the Exalted, also makes awards after trials. The trials of misfortunes and hardships that the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) passed through successfully would have vanquished another.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. V, No. 28, 31 July 1901, p. 4)

Those whom God determines to purify in consequence of their prayers are purified through calamities and fears, as set out in the verse under comment.

When a person gets rid of sins of conduct, Satan seeks shelter in his eyes, nose, etc. When he is expelld thereform also he tries that at least the heart might continue sinful. He continues his struggle till the end. But Satan cannot rule in a heart that fears God. Thus in the end Satan is vanquised, gives Up and departs.

(Al-Hakam, Vol. VI, No. 37, 17 October 1902, p. 7)

Human nature needs tribulation to achieve perfection. It is God's bounty that He puts a person on trial through misfortunes, which helps to develop his steadfastness and his reconciliation to divine decrees. Those who do not believe in God lose all hope over small troubles and seek comfort in suicide. Yet man is in need of such trials to complete his

development and to foster his faith in God.

God is Almighty and has every power. Those who are not tried in the way of God are wholly occupied with the world and its attractions. They never cast a look upwards and no thought of God flits across their minds. These people have exchanged the higher qualities for low desires. Had they developed their faith and spiritual insights they would have been equipped with such sources of comfort and contentment which cannot be found in wealth, property or any worldly delight. Alas, like children they are delighted with a glowing ember and are not aware of its dangers. Those who are blessed with Allah's grace and whom He enriches with the wealth of faith and certainty are tried by misfortune. Those who are not thus tried are unfortunate. They live in luxury like beasts. They have tongues but do not employ them in praise and glorification of God and in proclaiming the truth. Their tongues are used only for vicious talk and for savouring food and drink. They have eyes but they are used not for a study of nature but only for vice. How can they then gain joy and happiness ?

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Think not that he who encounters sorrow and grief is unfortunate. Indeed not. God loves him. As surgery is needed before balm is applied, sorrow and grief are needed in the search for God. It is a need of human nature, through filling which God demonstrates the true nature of the world and its calamities and hazards. It is through misfortunes that prayer demonstrates its wonderful qualities and effects. The truth is that it is only through prayer that man can win through to recognition of God. No other faith presents a concept of God which comprises hearing and answering of prayer. Can an orthodox Hindu who worships a stone idol or a tree or a cow say that his god is such that if prayed to it can answer prayer ? Indeed not. Can a Christian say : I believe in Jesus as my god, he hears and answers my prayer ? Again not. It is only the God of Islam Who speaks,

Who is presnted by the Quran, and Who says: Call on Me, I shall respond to you (40.61)

(Al-Hakam, Vol. VI, No. 45, 17 December, 1902, pp. 1-2)

God says: We shall try you in diverse ways; with fear and hunger and loss of your children etc.: wnereupon the faithful will say: All this was God's and so are we. These are the steadfast ones who have realised My purpose. They shall inherit My mercies without limit.

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(Al-Badar, Vol. II, No. 27, 24 July 1903 p. 211)

Every appointed one of God has been tried. Jesus (on whom be peace) was held in durance and was persecuted in many ways. How was Moses (on whom be peace) maltreated! The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) and his family and companions were shut in a narrow valley for 30 months and endured great hardships. But the end is always blessed. Had it been God's way that such appointed ones should lead lives of comfort and luxury, eating rich foods, then what would be the difference between them and the worldly people? To say: God be praised and thanked; after swallowing a rich meal is easy, and everyone can say it; but the test is to say it heartily in the midst of hardships.

Appointed ones and their companions are shaken, are threatened with ruin and subjected to every kind of danger. One purpose is that the infirm ones may be distinguished from those who are firm. The infirm ones are only companions of prosperity, they disperse in adversity. It is Allah's way with me that a sign is shown only in times of trial. God's love for His servants is manifested in trying them. As He says: Give glad tidings to the steadfast who, when a misfortune overtakes them say: To Allah we belong and to Him shall we return, In every type of trouble they have recourse only to God, the Most High. The bounties of God are bestowed only on those who are steadfast. Periods of ease and enjoyment appear delightful but end in nothing. Luxurious living disrupts the relationship with God. God's love subjects

His servant to hardship and thus manifests his greatness. Had the Chosroes not ordered the arrest of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) how would this miracle have come to light that he was slain the very night after his emissaries had arrived in Medina to execute his command ? If the Meccans had not expelled the Holy Prophet from Mecca, how would the revelation : We have granted thee a clear victory ; have been received ? Every miracle is related to a trial. A luxurious, neglectful life is in no way related to God. A series of worldly successes put an end to humility and entreaty while that is which God loves. Hardship is therefore, needful.

(Al-Badar, Vol. III, No. 10, 8 March 1904. p. 5)

There are two kinds of hardships. One, in which the suffering one receives comfort and is steadfast. Angels descend upon him with reassuring messages. Prophets and the righteous also experience such hardships. They come from God as trials, as He has warned in the verse under comment. The end of these offerings is joyful, and they are not painful while they last for steadfastness and comfort are administered by God during this period. The other kind of hardship is that in which the person suffering loses all patience and serenity and is plunged into a state which is neither life not death and feels wretched and miserable. This kind of suffering is brought on by misdeeds. This is referred to in the verse : Whatever misfortune befalls you is in consequence of that which you practice (42. 31). Fear of God is the only means of escaping such suffering.

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Al-Hakam, Vol. VIII, No. II, 31 March 1904, p. 3)

Trials are also of two kinds. One kind is related to the injunctions of the divine law, and the other is a matter of divine decree which is the subject of the verse under comment. The perfect man comes out of both unscathed. Some people are mindful of the injunctions of the law but feel aggrieved at having to face hardship under divine decree. He alone is strong and manful who combines correct doctrines with right-

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eous conduct and steadfastness under suffering.

(Al-Badar, Vol. III, Nos. 18-19, 8-16 May, 1904, p. 10)

There are two ways of winning God's grace. One is the way of piety, self discipline and spiritual exercises, and the other is through submission to divine decree. The first is very difficult to traverse. A person has to batter his physical self through voluntary effort. Few have the strength and power to endure suffering voluntarily. Suffering under divine decree falls upon one suddenly and unexpectedly, and when it does it has to be borne willy-nilly and becomes a means of self-purification. Consider the case of martyrs. They die in the course of battle and rank high in the sight of Allah. Their reward is great. They are thus elevated by the operation of divine decree. Had they to cut their own throats in cold blood, few would achieve martyrdom. The verse undercomment conveys divine greetings to the poor who endure every type of suffering under divine decree, and being steadfast become recipients of divine bounties and mercies. They experiece a large portion of life's bitterness. The rich are not so fortunate. (Al-Badar, Vol. III, No. 31, 16 August 1904, pp. 3-4)

Many people forget that the misfortunes that a person endures are not without cause and are not unconnected with his conduct. Bear well in mind that every misfortune that may be suffered here or in the hereafter is rooted in sin. By sinning a person puts himself away from divine grace and bounty and moves away from the source of all comfort and thus necessarily exposes himself to misfortune. It is true that Prophets and the righteous also suffer misfortunes and endure hardships, but it would be a grave error to imagine that in their case the misfortunes and hardships are the consequences of sin. There is a world of difference between the two and their causes are also entirely different. The Prophets and the righteous are endowed with fortitude of a fair quality by virtue of which the misfortunes and hardships assume a sweet flavour for them. They derive pleasure from them, and for

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them they become a means of spiritual progress. These misfortunes and hardships serve as ladders for their spiritual rise and are indispensable. He who does not encounter these misfortunes and hardships can make no progress.

In the normal worldly system also everyone who is desirous of progress has to pass through difficulties and hardships. These too, despite their calling for diligence and hard work have an attraction which draws on the aspirant. On the contrary, the misfortunes and hardships that overtake a person in consequence of his misconduct have a searing quality which makes life an unendurable burden for him. He would prefer death to such a life, but is unaware that his torment would not be terminated by death.

There is, therefore, a clear distinction between the suffering endured by a sinner for his misconduct and that borne by Prophets and the righteous. These last are a means for their spiritual exaltation. Those who do not appreciate this distinction are in great error. When they are overtaken by misfortunes, instead of learning a lesson, therefrom and turning a new leaf for the future they seek comfort in the reflection that they are in no worse case than the Prophets and Messengers who are also afflicted with misfortunes, forgetting that there is no comparison between the two. Bear well in mind that as just stated the hardships endured by the Prophets and righteous are out of love and are a means of spiritual advancement, and those inflicted on wrongdoers are a torment designed for their ruin. This is a distinction that needs no argumentation. When those who hold God above everything else, not even knowing why they love Him—they have not heaven or hell in mind, not being impelled to God's obedience by the desire of one or fear of the other, but only through a natural upsurge of emotion they are enamoured of God and are dedicated to His service—encounter misfortune or hardship they realise that it is a manifestation of divine love, for they perceive that thereby a fountain is realised from which they draw nourishment and

their hearts are filled with delight. The love of God wells up in their hearts and they desire an increase of hardships so that they may approach nearer to God and the stages of winning God's pleasure may be speedily traversed.

Words are not adequate for an apt description of the delight that these saintly ones find in these hardships it is far above earthly delights. These misfortunes are a grand feast in which diverse kinds of fruits and bounties and honours are served to them. God is then close to them, angels greet them, they are honoured with divine revelation and God's words provide them with comfort and reassurance. In the eyes of others they are afflicted with misfortunes, but in truth it is the season of the downpouring of God's grace and bounties. Worldly people can have no concept of it. I tell you truly this period of misfortunes and hardships is the season of true delights, for God, Who is the real object of man's search is then very close to him. The Holy Prophet has said: The Quran was revealed in a time of sorrows, you should study it in sorrow.

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It is difficult for me to expatiate on the joys and delights that a lover of God derives from these misfortunes and hardships. In brief, bear it in mind that the result of the misfortunes and hardships that are borne by saintly people is Paradise and spiritual advancement. The cause of the misfortunes and sorrows that afflict the wicked and the wrongdoers are their sins and misconduct and their results are hell and torment. He who approaches a fire will feel its heat and sense its burning and suffer discomfort. He who walks in a a garden will derive pleasure from its fruits, flowers, fragrance and fair prospects.

Now, is there any way of deliverance from the suffering that afflict a wrongdoer as a consequence of his misconduct and the sure end of which is hell and torment? The only way is that such a one should make sincere repentance. Till he does that he can procure no release from such sufferings, for Allah will not depart from the law He has appoint-

ed for that purpose. Allah does not bring about a change in the condition of a people until they carry out a change in themselves (13.12). Allah desires a pure change, and till such a change is effected there can be no deliverance from divine chastisement. Therefore, he who desires a change in heaven concerning himself, that is to say, seeks deliverance from the sufferings and torments which his misconduct has brought upon him, should make it his first concern to carry out a change in himself. When he succeeds in doing that Allah, the Exalted, as He has promised in the verse just cited, changes his suffering into ease.

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That a person desires to be shielded against hardships and sufferings which are a consequence of misconduct needs no elaboration. This can only be achieved through sincere repentance. One of the benefits that ensue from repentance is that God becomes the guardian of the penitent, removes all his ills, and safeguards him against the projects that his enemies devise against him. This grace and blessing of His are not limited and confined to any particular individual or group. All are His creatures. Every one who approaches Him and carries out His commandments and injunctions will be the same as an earlier penitent. He shields every true penitent against misfortunes and loves him.

(Al-Hakam Vol. VIII, No. 31, 17 September 1904, p. 3)

In the verse under comment loss of fruits includes loss of children. These are trials by which Allah tests His servants. Perfect faith and steadfastness under trials are achieved through repentance and supplication for forgiveness and for being safe-guarded against sin. Occupy yourselves therewith and pray often : Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves and if Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us we shall surely be of the lost (7 24). Allah will bestow upon you better than He has taken from you. He who does not let go of Allah will be forgiven his sins. To turn away from Him is fatal. Repent and pray to be for-given and shie ded, and supplicate humbly during Salat. May

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Allah help you.

(Al-Badar, Vol. III, No.44—45, 24 Nov., and 1 Dec., 1904, p. 3)

Bewailing and mourning the dead in an unseemly manner, weeping and crying aloud and uttering words betokening suffering and anguish are ways which would entail loss of faith. These are all Hindu customs. Ignorant Muslims have laid aside their own values and have adopted the ways of the Hindus. The Holy Quran directs that on the death of a dear one all that need be said is: To Allah we belong, and to Him shall we return; meaning we are God's property, He can take us at His will. Tears may be shed to give vent to emotion; any demonstration beyond that is Satanic.

(Al-Badar, Vol. II, No. 30, 26 July 1906, p. 12)

There are two ways of achieving spiritual progress. One is through carrying out the commandments and injunctions contained in the Holy Quran. As one has a certain degree of choice and latitude in this context one may seek easy ways of conforming to them, and on occasion one may lack zeal or be inclined towards laxity. The other is the way that God imposes, and this is the effective way of achieving progress. So far as the first is concerned a certain degree of ease and comfort could be devised. If a person was handed a whip and was directed to strike himself with it, he would naturally shrink from making the strokes too painful for himself. Who would wish to inflict pain upon himself? Allah, the Exalted, has, therefore, devised another method for man's spiritual development. This is set out in the verse under comment. God says: We shall keep trying you with fear, starvation, loss of property, lives and fruits. There is, however, good news for those who endure these hardships with steadfastness saying: To Allah we belong, and to Him shall we return. They shall have great rewards in the shape of Allah's blessings and bounties. Consider how much labour a cultivator devotes towards levelling and ploughing his fields, then sows them and provides irrigation for the crops. At

last when the harvest is ready after a prolonged series of hard and diligent efforts, God's mysterious and far-seeing wisdom sometimes destroys it by sending a hailstorm or by other means. This is an illustrations of the hardships that may be imposed by divine decree. The teaching vouchsafed to the Muslims for meeting such contingencies is an excellent lesson and true model of submission to divine decrees. The Muslims alone are favoured in this way. How could an Arya Samajist, who believes that soul and matter are self-created and eternal like God Himself, bring himself to say: To Allah we belong ?

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Thus hardships are of two kinds. One, those prescribed by divine law ; like Salat, fasting, Zakat, Pilgrimage. Here there is some room for excuses and devices. Unless a person is utterly sincere and has perfect faith, he can devise some means of carrying out these injunctions with comparative ease and comfort. To make up for any deficiency in the performance of these obligations by reason of the weakness of human nature, Allah, the exalted, has instituted the hardships that are imposed by divine decree, so that the deficiency may be filled through His grace. The Arya Samajists ascribe these hardships to the conduct of the individual in his previous incarnation. If that is so, what is the purpose behind their elaborate ceremonial of worship ? If these hardships are the consequences of your conduct in a previous incarnation why do you add to them by embarking upon an elaborate system of worship ? Of what avail is it ?

(Al-Hakam, Vol. XII, No. 41, 14 July 1908, p. 10)

To help man along the path of progress some hardships are sent from heaven. These are mentioned in the verse under comment. These are hardships inflicted by God Himself. This is a trial in which a person is sometimes subjected to great fear. He lives under a terrible apprehension of instant ruin. Sometimes he experiences extreme privation. He may

suffer loss of wealth. His business may decline or he may be robbed. There may be loss of fruits, a harvest may fail or dearly loved children may die. Children are also a great trial. Many people write to me begging me to pray that they may be blessed with children. The shock of a child's death sometimes causes a person to lose his faith in God. A person may be so inordinately fond of his children as to set them up as rivals to God. In some cases parents become atheists and irreligious on account of their children. There have been instances of parents becoming Christians because their children had been converted to Christianity. But God is not unjust. When a person proves himself steadfast in the face of a severe calamity, his reward is in proportion thereto. Allah, the Most High, is Merciful, Forgiving and Compassionate. He does not put a person in trouble to drive him away from faith but to enable him to step forward. The mystics have opined that a disobedient one steps back under trial and a righteous one goes forward. (Al-Badar, Vol. VII, No. 2, 16 January 1908 pp. 4-5).

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When I consider your tribulations and then think of the noble attributes of Allah, the Exalted, of which I have personal experience and which have touched me closely, I am reassured, for I know that Allah, the Noble, is All-Powerful, Who delivers His servants from severe sufferings and great misfortunes. He afflicts those whose spiritual insight He desires to foster. So that they May realise how He can convert despair into hope. Indeed He is Almighty, Merciful and Compassionate. (Maktoobat, Vol. V. No. 2, pp. 20-21, Letter No. 14, addressed to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I.)

However severe a misfortune may be, the doors of Allah's grace are always open. One should always hope for His mercy. During a period of anxiety recourse should be had to repentance and seeking forgiveness. It is worth remembering that if a person, afflicted with a misfortune, utterly discards and eschews, by way of repentance, a sin or shortcoming, the instant casting aside of which he had by no means con-

templated, this serves as a grand atonement for him. The moment he makes up his mind to it the darkness of the misfortune is dispelled and the light of hope appears. (Maktoobat, Vol. V, No. 2, p. 84, Letter No. 61, addressed to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I.)

> Safa and Marwa are among the Signs of Allah; it is no sin for one who is on Pilgrimage to the House or performs 'Umra to ambulate between the two. Whoso does good voluntarily, beyond that which is prescribed, should know that Allah is Appreciating, All-Knowing. (2 : 159)

It is obvious that as man has been created for serving God, the whole of comfort and prosperity lie in his belonging utterly to God: but real comfort cannot be achieved till this true relationship is translated from a potentiality into active conduct. When a person turns away from God his situation is as if he closes all the windows and shutters of his room, with the result that the light of the sun will be shut out and the room will be plunged into darkness. That is the darkness which is called misguidance and it is synonymous with hell, for it is at the root of all troubles and misfortunes. If the means of dispelling this darkness and of delivery from this hell is sought in accord with the law of nature, there is no need to crucify anyone. All that is needed is to reopen the windows which had been closed. Can anyone believe that we can have any light while we insist on keeping them shut? Indeed not.

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The forgiveness of sin is not a fable that can only be played out in the next life. A person is called an offender or sinner when turning away from God he puts himself out of the range of the light which descends from God upon human hearts. That position is called *junah* (the word in the verse under comment which has been translated "sin"). Its root *janaha* means to lean away from the center. *Junah* denotes "sin" because a sinner leans away from the spot

where the divine light falls and thus puts himself out of the range of the illumination that is available at its proper spot. In the same way *jurum* (sin or offence) is derived from *jarama*, which means cutting off. *Jurum* denotes "offence", because an offender cuts asunder from God. *Jurum* has a sharper connotation than *junah*. The latter applies to any wrongful inclination, and the former denotes a deliberate perpetration of an heinous offence in defiance of God's law and in disregard of man's relationship with Him. (Kitabal Bariyyah, pp. 54-55)

> Those who conceal that which we have sent down comprising Signs and guidance after We have made it clear in the Book, are cursed by Allah and by those who curse. (2 : 160)

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Those who conceal from the people the clear teachings and guidance that We have set out in Our Book are cursed by Allah and by His servants. (Tableegh Risalat, Vol. II, p.46)

Even a person of less than average intelligence cannot remain unaware of the open and severe condemnations expressed in the Holy Quran. The so-called "civilized" people of this age consider "curse" a term of abuse, but the Holy Quran pronounces public condemnation of disbelievers by cursing them. For instance: On them shall be the curse of Allah and of angels and of men all together; they shall continue under it (2. 162); and also in the verse under comment. (Izalahi Auham, Part I, pp. 25-26, footnote)

I can affirm truly that so far as I can recall I have never applied a single abusive term to my opponents. It is a most annoying failing that many people do not appreciate the distinction between fact and abuse and rate both of them as the same. A statement of fact which is relevant to the occasion is regarded abusive because of a tinge of bitterness which is a characteristic of truth. A false statement inspired by the desire to annoy or hurt is abuse. If every stern and painful statement can be regarded as abuse because of its bitter or hurtful tone, then it must be confessed that the Holy Quran is full of abuse, for the denigrating expressions applied to idols and their worshippers, in the Quran could certainly not have afforded pleasure to the idol-worshippers. (Izalahi Auham, Part I, pp. 13—14)

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